

NEW YORK HERALD.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC, Irving place.—ITALIAN OPERA.—
IN HALLS IN MANHATTAN.

NIBLO'S GARDEN, Broadway.—Richard III.

WINTER GARDEN, Broadway.—Natali Quere—MARRIED
LIFE.WALLACK'S THEATRE, No. 844 Broadway.—TOWN AND
COUNTRY.LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE, Broadway.—OUR AMERICAN
CONJUR.NEW BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—FOX WARRIOR
BY HONORABLE HENRY SEYMOUR AND PAUL WARRIOR
AND PAUL SEYMOUR AT THE STRAW—LONG WOOD.BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—STERN'S NATIONAL
CIRCUS.—LITERARY AND EVENING.BARON'S AMERICAN MUSEUM, Broadway.—Day and
Evening.—OCEANOGRAPHY, HYDROGRAPHY, AND OTHER
CURIOSITIES.BRYANT'S MINSTRELS, Mechanics' Hall, 472 Broadway.—
DOWNS IN OLD K-Y-K-Y.HOOVER'S MINSTRELS, Sullivan Institute, No. 659
Broadway.—STANDARD SONG, DANCES, &c.MELROD'S CONCERT HALL, No. 539 Broadway.—
SONGS, DANCES, &c.—HOLIDAY IN IRELAND.CANTHERBURY MUSIC HALL, 882 Broadway.—SONGS,
DANCES, &c.—HOLIDAY IN IRELAND.GAIETIES CONCERT ROOM, 616 Broadway.—DRAWING
ROOM ENTERTAINMENT, BALLET, &c.—SONGS, &c.AMERICAN MUSIC HALL, 444 Broadway.—SONGS, BAL-
LET, &c.—HOLIDAY IN IRELAND.CRYSTAL PALACE CONCERT HALL, No. 45 Bowery.—
SONGS, DANCES, &c.—HOLIDAY IN IRELAND.PARISIAN CABINET OF WONDERS, 563 Broadway.—
Open daily from 10 A. M. till 9 P. M.NOVELTY MUSIC HALL, 616 Broadway.—BREVETTES
SONGS, DANCES, &c.

New York, Wednesday, February 5, 1862.

THE SITUATION.

With the exception of some skirmishing in the direction of Polk church and the village of Occoquan there is nothing to report from the Army of the Potomac. A party from the Third Michigan regiment advanced as far as Occoquan on Monday, and had a slight brush with a picket of the rebels, in which four of the latter were seen to fall. An attempt to follow the reconnoitering party of the Michigan regiment was made as they returned, but the rebels did not come near enough to do any damage.

The documents brought under the flag of truce to General McDowell's division turn out to be an intimation from Jeff. Davis to President Lincoln that if the rebel bridge burners in Missouri are hung, according to the orders of General Halleck, Colonels Corcoran, Lee and others now held as hostages for the privatesmen in our hands, will be hung in retaliation. A cabinet meeting was held yesterday to discuss this extraordinary communication, but the result is not divulged. It is evident that the rebel leaders are determined to make the most of the advantage they have obtained in the possession of our gallant officers.

The condition of the negroes, or "contrabands," who have been deserted by their masters and are now enjoying the refuge of the Union army at Fortress Monroe, is occupying the serious attention of Major Gen. Wool. Over three thousand of these negroes are now receiving support, and are being employed in the several camps, and their number is increasing every day. The difficulty of taking care of them is very great, inasmuch as many of them are composed of women and children, and reports having reached General Wool that these unfortunates are in some instances a source of embarrassment to the different military commanders under whose protection they have come, the Major General has issued an order instituting a commission, composed of Colonel J. T. Cram, Inspector General, and Major Legrand B. Cannon, Aid-de-Camp, to investigate the condition of the contrabands and provide for their wants.

We publish, under the appropriate head in today's HERALD, highly interesting letters from our correspondents at Somerset, Mill Springs and Monticello, Kentucky. Our Somerset correspondent says the movements of the Union troops at that place and Mill Spring are in union, but thinks the idea of invading East Tennessee to aid her loyal men is not practicable at present, owing to the difficulty in procuring commissariat and quartermaster stores to sustain troops and horses. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Union troops are bound southward. General Schoepff's brigade has been moved five miles to the southward of Somerset, to the Cumberland river. General Thomas has his headquarters at Somerset. On the 27th ult. a rebel flag of truce came to Mill Spring; the escort consisted of two prominent rebel officers and ten or twelve men. The chief of the party, Captain Henry Ewing, of the late General Zollicoffer's staff, was the bearer of two letters from the rebel General Crittenden, in which he requested the remains of Zollicoffer. Brigadier General Manson, the Union commander, received the letters, and replied that Zollicoffer's remains had already been sent to his relatives in charge of a rebel surgeon who was captured at Mill Spring. While in the Union camp the rebel Captain Ewing made an interesting statement relative to the battle of Mill Spring, and the circumstances of the death of Zollicoffer. He thinks General Geo. Crittenden is a "patriot and a coward," and says he was one of the first to retreat from the advance of the Unionists. The other rebel officer, who accompanied the flag of truce, stated that Generals Crittenden and Carroll are "two whiskey bloats." Our Monticello correspondent gives a graphic description of that place, and dwells at length upon the deplorable condition of the surrounding country, and the devastation and vandalism committed by the rebel troops. Each of the letters referred to will be found highly interesting.

CONGRESS.

In the Senate yesterday, Mr. Sumner, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported a bill authorizing the appointment of diplomatic representatives to the republics of Liberia and Hayti. The resolution relative to the command of the Department of Kansas, and calling on the Secretary of War for the orders and directions in regard to supplies for that command, and whether it is to be commanded by General Lane, and whether the orders have been changed since General Lane left, and whether the order of General Lane is according to the order of the War Department, was taken up. Mr. Pomeroy said the resolution was offered in accordance with a suggestion from the Secretary of War, whereupon it was adopted.

The bill providing for the construction of twenty iron-clad steamers for the coast defence was discussed, and recommitted to the Committee on Naval Affairs. A bill providing aid for a railroad and telegraph line to the Pacific was referred to the special committee on that subject. The debate on the resolution relative to the expulsion of Mr. Bright was then resumed. Messrs. Browning, of Illinois; Dixon, of Connecticut; Doolittle, of Iowa; Willey, of Virginia; Davis, of Kentucky; Sumner, of Massachusetts, and others participating in the discussion.

In the House of Representatives, the debate on the Treasury Note bill was continued by Messrs. Morrill, of Vermont, and Roscoe L. Conkling, of New York, in opposition to the clause making the government paper a legal tender. Full reports of their remarks are given in the record of the Congressional proceedings in to-day's paper.

In the Senate of our State Legislature yesterday, the first business was the resolutions in reference to the expulsion of United States Senator Bright. A substitute for the original resolutions was finally adopted—21 to 8—in effect declaring Mr. Bright to be a traitor, but leaving our Senators in Congress untrammelled with regard to voting on his expulsion. Bills were introduced to define the powers and duties of port captains and harbor masters of the port of New York; to amend the act for the incorporation of fire insurance companies; to regulate the sale of hay and straw in this city and Brooklyn; relative to Kings county jails, and in relation to closing, extending and widening certain Brooklyn streets. A favorable report was made on the Kings county Supervisors' bill for borrowing money to build a new Court House. The annual report of the State Normal School was presented. The Assembly was occupied during the greater part of the day in Committee of the Whole, over a number of bills. Considerable business was transacted by the committee, but nearly all of it either of only a local or private character. The bill relative to agencies of foreign insurance companies was ordered to a third reading; also the bill to amend the General Fire Insurance Company act.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

The steamship Edinburg, which sailed from Liverpool on the 22d and Queenstown on the 23d of January, is due at this port with European news three days later than that brought by the Africa. This makes the fifth transatlantic steamer now on their way to American ports.

The steamship Northern Light arrived at this port yesterday, bringing interesting intelligence from the South Pacific, &c. From San Salvador we learn that a plot to assassinate General Barrios, the President, had been discovered in time to prevent its being carried out. We also have information of a deep laid plot for the abduction or assassination of General Castilla, matured on the night of January 1; but the scheme, as in former instances, failed in its object, from the treachery of some of its authors. The design appears to have been to induce the General to go on board the Ucayali, a steamer then lying in Chorrillos harbor, and then to take him prisoner; but for some reason he refused to go, and the plan was then arranged to take him or assassinate him at his residence; but this also failed of success, as Castilla was warned in time to escape. The Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary, Mr. Christopher Robinson, from the United States, was duly received by the Peruvian authorities on the 10th ult. The whole civil and military powers of Lima were in requisition to do honor to the veteran, and to evince sympathy and regard for the honored republic which he represented. A serious riot occurred at Aspinwall on the 24th of January, between the police and the soldiery sent from Panama by the Governor. They got into a quarrel with the jailer, broke open the jail and set all the prisoners at liberty. Subsequently they went around the town and arrested several innocent and respectable persons opposed to the administration in politics. Several shots were fired, and one or two men were killed and some wounded.

Our correspondent in Belize, Honduras, writing on the 16th of December, says:—Trade is dull. Lumber scarce and very dear. Provisions plentiful and low. A new tariff is to be designated, at the end of March. This settlement is to be designated as a colony during the present year. The immigration bill will most likely be passed, in view of developing the resources of the country.

The legislative committee resumed their investigations into the shoddy clothing and military equipments generally, yesterday at the St. Nicholas Hotel, and were in session from nine o'clock in the morning until late last night. Between forty and fifty witnesses have now been examined. The testimony elicited yesterday is said to be of the richest character, showing absolute favoritism on the part of the State Military Board in giving their contracts to the highest bidders. Indeed it is known that such downright swindling has been proven that the people will be amazed when it is made public. The immaculate Thurlow Weed figures very conspicuously in the testimony. Some twenty more witnesses have been subpoenaed for to-morrow, from whom some spicy evidence is expected. As the committee will likely leave for Albany on Thursday, it is not probable that their investigation will be completed this week.

A beautiful specimen of the operations of the "red tape" method of doing business is exhibited in a transaction on the part of some of the government officials with Mr. Solomon Sturgis, of Chicago—a man well known for his generosity in contributing funds in aid of the volunteers. It appears that Mr. Sturgis was the owner of a steaming which was very much needed by the government on the Mississippi river, and notice to that effect was given him, the tug having cost originally \$5,000. She was immediately put in proper trim at an additional cost of..... 2,500 She was then taken from the lake through the Illinois canal and river and down to St. Louis, at an expense of..... 500 No government agent could be found authorized to purchase, and Mr. Sturgis went to Secretary Welles, by whom he was referred to Secretary Cameron, who turned him over to Quartermaster General Meigs, who sent him to General Halleck, not one of whom could render any satisfaction. This roundabout movement entailed an additional expense of..... 300 Mr. Sturgis then left for home, and shortly after received news that his tug, after being seized and used for a time by the Provost Marshal, had been allowed to sink at the landing; but the wharf master had raised her, and he was required to redeem her for..... 1,400

Which, of course, he did, making the total cost of the vessel..... \$9,500 The boat is now worth..... 2,000

Loss by "red tape"..... \$7,500 There are now not less than thirty-five thousand troops at Cairo, and preparations are actively going on for the great Mississippi expedition. Some delay has been occasioned by the want of men for the gunboats; but they have recently been filled up very fast with sailors from Chicago.

General James H. Lane, who was recently appointed a brigadier general, has not yet resigned his seat in the United States Senate, and the Legislature of Kansas has consequently made no movement towards the election of his successor. It is thought that unless he succeeds in getting the command of the Cherokee expedition he will return to the Senate.

Governor Olden, of New Jersey, has tendered an invitation to a number of the military organizations in this city to participate in the obsequies of the late Colonel Allen and Surgeon Weller, of the Ninth New Jersey regiment, who were drowned off Cape Hatteras.

Twelve passenger trains run now daily between the cities of Baltimore and Washington, and twice a week a car provided with beds leaves Washington for the accommodation of sick and wounded soldiers.

Preparations are being largely made in the West

to go into the manufacture of maple sugar this spring on an extensive scale. This business, in consequence of the high price of cane sugar, will be likely to prove very remunerative.

The meeting to be held in Faneuil Hall, Boston, this evening, to take measures for the release of Colonel Corcoran, promises to be a grand affair.

Sleighting was in full play yesterday and last night all over the city. The snow on Central Park was in magnificent condition for the sport, and, according to the gate keepers' returns, over seven thousand vehicles on runners visited the grounds during the day and evening. Bromptonale road was much improved for sleighing since the last fall of snow, and the number of vehicles of all kinds that passed along it was considerable. Along Broadway the long stage sleighs, as well as private vehicles, were to be seen in goodly numbers, and the air last evening rang again till a late hour with the boisterous mirth, the merry chorus and the loud cries of the drivers of the sleighs, as they rattled along to the merry jingle of the bells.

The snow was yesterday cleared from the surface of the ice on the Central Park early enough to allow both ponds to be opened for skating in the morning, and as soon as the fact became known the skaters made their way to their winter playground. The ice on the lower pond was rough, but very fair withal. On the upper pond it was somewhat better, but still far from good; yet when the mass of snow that had to be removed is taken in consideration it was really better than could have been expected. There has been, this season, twenty-three days of skating on the Central Park, nineteen of which have been on both ponds. The return of the number of visitors yesterday, up to six o'clock, was a little short of twenty-five thousand, and as the ice in the evening was illuminated by both calcium light and the faint rays of young Diana, fully five thousand more persons were present after that hour. *Viva la bagatelle!*

A meeting of the Aldermanic Committee on Street Cleaning, consisting of Aldermen Froment, Hall and Welch, was held at the City Hall yesterday. The only action taken by them was to notify the Comptroller and Street Inspector to meet them on Thursday next, when another meeting will be held and some steps taken to relieve our streets of the immense amount of slush and mud with which they will be flooded when a thaw sets in, and of which we have already had a good sample during the greater part of last month.

The United States Marshal had not received any communication from Washington, up to a late hour yesterday, in the case of Captain Gordon, sentenced to be hung on Friday next.

In the Court of General Sessions yesterday, Daniel McCormick, indicted for burglary in the first degree, in entering the dwelling house of Charles Reining, 196 West Twenty-seventh street, on the 19th of December, pleaded guilty to an attempt at burglary in the second degree, and was sent to the State Prison for two years and four months. Wm. H. Young, alias Storms, pleaded guilty to the offence of larceny from the person, having swindled Wm. Cowley out of \$300 by means of the confidence game. It appears that Cowley was on his way from Minnesota to Europe, and while stopping at Sweeney's Hotel, in Chatham street, Storms ingratiated himself into the good graces of Cowley. Learning that he was about to start for Europe, he told him that he could procure English money lower than the usual rate. They went to the Astor House on the 15th of November last, and Storms, after taking the money to get it exchanged, neglected to return to his friend. About three weeks afterwards detectives Farley and Eustis arrested this accomplished confidence man, who, it appears, has served a term in the State Prison. The Recorder remanded Storms till Saturday, in order to give him a chance to return a portion of the money.

The recent panic in the cotton market, accompanied with some softening in prices, attracted more attention on the part of spinners, some of whom entered the market yesterday and purchased some 600 a 700 bales, and some parties reported the amount at 1,000 bales, closing rather quiet, within the range of 31c. a 32c. for middling uplands. A government sale of 160 bales of cotton, from Port Royal, is to be held to-day by Messrs. Burdett, Jones & Co., at the Atlantic Dock. It all, with the exception of nine bales of uplands, consists of Sea Islands. The terms will be cash. Flour was 5c. per bbl. higher, while sales were to a fair extent. Wheat was quite firm but less active, with a fair local and export demand. Corn was firm, while sales were fair, including Western mixed in store at 65c., and at 66c. delivered, and 68c. for old round and flat yellow. Pork was firm, with some less activity in sales, which embraced new mess at \$12 3/4 a 13, old do. at \$12 25, new prime at \$9 50, and city prime mess at \$13 25 a 13 50. Sugars were steady, with sales of 1,300 hhds. and 29 boxes. Coffee was quiet; the stock of Rio and Santos embraced 56,000 bags, and a total of all kinds of 134,337 bags. Freight was inactive, and the engagements making light, at rates given in another place.

The Financial Measures of the Government.—Necessity for Immediate Action.

We published yesterday a note from the Secretary of the Treasury to Mr. Spaulding, in which he says "immediate action" in Congress. "Immediate action" says Mr. Chase, "is of great importance. The Treasury is nearly empty. I have been obliged to draw for the last instalment of the November loan. So soon as it is paid I fear the banks generally will refuse to receive the United States Treasury notes. You will see the necessity of urging the bill through without delay."

It will be seen from this important communication that the Treasury is nearly empty, and that Mr. Chase fears the banks will refuse to receive any more Treasury notes after the last instalment of the November loan has been paid. There is, therefore, a necessity for the immediate action of Congress upon the Demand Note bill. It is not the Secretary of War, or the Secretary of the Navy, or the whole Cabinet combined, or the President himself, or Gen. McClellan, who is now retarding the naval and military operations destined to crush the rebellion, and who is thus risking the recognition of the independence of the South by the Powers of Europe, and it may be, an attempt to break up the blockade, involving a foreign war or the dishonor of the country. The whole responsibility rests on Congress. From its inactivity everything is kept back. It is needless to say that to provide the means and ways for the war belongs exclusively to that body. Though it is now in session two months, it has literally done nothing but consume the precious hours of the public time in discussing abstract questions about the negro and other matters of no pressing importance and of no practical bearing upon the great question of the day. The Committee of Ways and Means were appointed last July. They then knew we were embarked in a formidable war, which could not be carried on without money. It was their sacred and solemn duty to come prepared with their plans at the opening of the session in December, by which they would have saved two months time, and have contributed in no small degree to place the cause of the Union in a much more commanding position than it occupies to-day.

There is now no remedy for past apathy and neglect but in double energy for the present and increasing activity and vigor for the future. Let Congress, therefore, redeem its errors by taking prompt action upon the Treasury Demand Note bill. The luminous and able speech of Mr. Hooper in the House of Repre-

sentatives, which we published yesterday, gives a clear exposition not only of this measure, but of the whole system of measures of which it is a part. It is only when the bill is thus viewed in connection with the bill for the issue of United States bonds to the amount of five hundred millions (\$500,000,000), bearing six per cent interest, redeemable in twenty or thirty years, interest to be paid in specie; the bill to raise taxes to the amount of \$150,000,000, for the specific purpose of paying the interest and principal of these bonds, together with the ordinary expenditure of the government; and the Banking bill, by which the banks of the country will be furnished by the government with an issue of a new uniform currency, for which the banks will have to deposit with the government an equivalent of United States stocks, better security than the State stocks, upon which the currency of the best of the State banks is based, to say nothing of the hundreds of rotten and rickety banks whose issues are secured only by fancy stocks, and often have no security at all—it is only when viewed in combination with these measures that the Demand Note bill is seen in its true light; for the notes are to be exchanged, at the option of the holder, for the six per cent bonds, and the bonds are to be secured, interest and principal, in specie payments, by the Tax bill.

Under these circumstances, why should not the \$150,000,000 demand notes be made a legal tender? They ought to be as good as gold. The propriety of making them a legal tender may be seen in the fact that \$150,000,000 of taxes are to be raised. In what money are these taxes to be paid? Not in gold, for that cannot be had; and not in the dubious paper money of the banks, so liable to depreciation. The demand notes, being at par, a standard of value and a legal tender, will exactly suit the purpose.

The issue of these notes is required for the immediate purposes of the government, and it is only a temporary measure till there is time to put the Banking bill into organization, which will furnish the country with a more permanent currency. The demand notes, having served their purpose as a circulating medium for a short time, will be funded at par by the holders for United States stocks bearing six per cent interest. This provision alone would prevent the depreciation of the notes, even if they were not made a legal tender; for the moment there was a tendency towards an excessive circulation of the paper a check would be instantly put upon it by the funding process, which would soon diminish the circulation, and thus restore the equilibrium. By the time the demand notes are funded and nearly out of circulation the Banking bill will come into operation to supply their place with a sound paper currency, which will be guaranteed to the people by United States stocks, and will have the effect of getting rid of the \$150,000,000 of spurious paper money now afloat among the community.

This new currency will be accessible to any of the present banks who desire to purchase it, or to any new banks that may be organized, the terms to be the purchase and deposit with the government of United States stocks to the amount of bills issued. This arrangement will obviate the objection to the establishment of a bank of the United States, which might be used as a political engine, to the detriment of the people. The currency thus sent abroad will be better secured than Bank of England notes, whose bills are based upon the stocks of the British government. Why are those stocks considered so good security? Because the interest is punctually paid in specie or its equivalent. It is well known that the principal will never be paid. But those who invest do not want the principal. Their object is the interest; and if any holder should desire to obtain the principal he can at any moment find a purchaser who will pay it to him. Now the new currency of the United States will have better security than the notes of the Bank of England; for the stocks by which the latter are secured are also security for the deposits of customers. The value of the security is thus lessened by being divided, whereas in the case of the new American currency the security will be undivided and pledged specially and exclusively for the payment of the notes.

Meantime let the Demand Note bill be pushed forward rapidly; for the troops must be paid, and the military operations must be carried on, unless we are to abandon the war. And let the Tax bill speedily follow it, and not be delayed till April, as is now intimated. By the passing of a tax bill the demand notes will go off well from the start, and no attempt of scheming financiers and speculators can succeed in depreciating them. The Tax bill will be the true alchemy which will turn the paper money of the government into gold. John Randolph once said in Congress that he had discovered the philosopher's stone, and that was the simple plan of "pay as you go." There is sound philosophy in the plan, and the nearest approach to it is the immediate adoption of a tax bill on a comprehensive scale, which will reach every class in the community.

MILITARY BURIAL GROUNDS.—The universal instincts of humanity encourage respect for the dead. However bitterly we may have detested the individual during life, we forgive him when he is departed, and look with awe upon that mysterious bourn whither he is gone, and to which we are all bound. To the dead of the Union army we, the people of the United States, owe a moral debt, and it is our duty to bury them, and that decently. We are sorry to say, however, that we have been neglectful in this respect, owing, doubtless, to the difficulties attending internment. There has been a promiscuous huddling of human bodies together in the one rude grave, without any measures being adopted to secure the identity of the respective corpses; and, as a consequence, there has been grief in many homes when relatives came to claim the dead and were unable to find them. It is now suggested, and very properly, that national cemeteries should be provided where the troops are most numerous, and that the ground should be invested with that sacredness which is usually attached to places of internment in every part of the civilized world, and from which the bodies of the dead may be taken by their living relatives when desired. In future years these places of sepulture will be full of interest, and it will be at least satisfactory to our volunteers to know that if they die they will be buried in a recognized spot. We therefore heartily approve of the suggestion made in Congress on the subject, and we trust that the committee appointed to inquire into the matter will be successful in carrying out the idea.

The Blunders of the Rebellion and the Consequences.

The Religious Herald, a Baptist paper, published at Richmond, Va., in a calm and deliberate survey of our Southern rebellion, says that the responsible parties in its management have made at least eight great blunders, and thus enumerated them:—

1. In firing upon Fort Sumter.
2. In believing there would be a divided North and an authentic federal government.
3. In believing that they would have the hearty sympathies of Europe.
4. In believing that the bonds of their confederacy would readily be taken in Europe.
5. In believing that the military power of the North would be directed in a crusade against slavery rather than employed for the overthrow of treason and the establishment of the Union and the constitution.
6. In believing that Northern courage and physique were no match for Southern, or that in battle one Southern equalled five Yankees.
7. In believing that the flag of the cotton oligarchy would wave above the Capitol at Washington, and the roll of slaves be called on Bunker Hill.
8. In believing that the fancied omnipotence of cotton would dominate the commerce of the world.

The intelligent reader cannot fail to recognize this budget of blunders as very well put for our Southern contemporary. The firing upon Fort Sumter, however, though a great blunder on the part of the rebels, was with them a desperate necessity. They wanted Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri, and all these States were believed to be holding back only because of the manifest inclinations of the Virginia State Convention, then in session, to adhere to the Union. The bombardment of Sumter was thus resolved upon in order to coerce that Union State Convention of Virginia into an act of secession, and the experiment gave the secession mob of Richmond the occasion they wanted for terrifying the Convention into a secret secession ordinance.

This ordinance was passed in secret, and kept a secret for some time, in order to steal a march upon Norfolk, the Navy Yard and the dozen ships-of-war, and the immense stores of artillery, ammunition and other warlike materials then at that place; and in order, if possible, to capture Fortress Monroe and the arsenal of small arms at Harper's Ferry; and in order to arm from that arsenal an organized band of rebels assigned to the grand enterprise of the seizure of Washington. These schemes, though secretly attempted, were only partially successful. The conspirators entered Harper's Ferry to find its great arsenal in flames. Thus despoiled of their expected supply of arms, they had to postpone their midnight descent upon Washington to a more convenient season. They surrounded Norfolk to find its ship-houses, officers' quarters and our fleet in the harbor on fire. They made some reconnaissance of Fortress Monroe, which satisfied them that they had come too late. But with the signal from Sumter Virginia was dragged overboard into the Dismal Swamp of secession, and North Carolina and Tennessee were carried down with her; and from the schemes just recited and the events of last April the reader will understand how narrowly we escaped without the loss of our national capital.

With a little more energy and celerity on the part of the rebels in carrying out their schemes connected with the Sumter bombardment, they might have added Maryland and Washington to their acquisitions, and then their Southern confederacy might have been nearer realization. Their plans were feasible, although they were stupendous; but their first great blunder in every stage of this programme was that they were too slow, and hence they were always a little too late in their movements. Their bombardment of Sumter instantly enlightened them upon the questions of a divided North and an apathetic federal government. But these blunders on the part of the rebel conspirators were discovered too late to be repaired; and so, step by step, their props and supports have been taken away, until nothing is left them but the desperate suicidal expedient of burning themselves out of house and home in order to drive away the encompassing fleets and armies of the Union. Davis and his confederates have realized nothing from the sympathies of Europe; Southern Confederate bonds are worth no more in the money markets of the world outside of our rebellion than the promissory notes of an impostor; our abolition disunionists have failed in their expected aid to their Southern disunion allies in their failure to make this war an abolition crusade against slavery; Northern courage and skill in the art of war have been sufficiently tried to satisfy the rebels of their awful blunder upon this matter; the city of Washington, which was the original destination of Jeff. Davis, has ceased to enter into his calculations as an object of this war; and "King Cotton" is in a most deplorable situation, and his kingdom is in imminent danger of being parcelled out among the Medes and Persians in other parts of the world, never again to be re-established in our Southern States as a commercial monopoly or as a political balance of power.

Well may our religious contemporary of Richmond pronounce judgment upon the eight great blunders of this rebellion; for so they now stand confessed by the events and developments of this war, and by the rebel leaders themselves. In their savage instructions to their women and children to lay waste their dwellings and their substance by fire, on the approach of our armies, we recognise only the reckless ferocity of a gang of pirates preparing to light the magazine of their ship in order to escape from the clutches of the law. This is the worst of the whole rebel budget of blunders, and next to it is the absurd idea of pushing the war into the heart of our loyal States.

But there is still another great blunder which the rebel leaders adopted in the outset of this war which is entitled to especial notice. We allude to the blunder of enlisting their soldiers for the short term of one year, upon the presumption that within this interval Southern activity in the field, with the assistance of "King Cotton" in England, would bring about a treaty of peace and the establishment of a Southern confederacy. So it happens that the terms of enlistment of the rebel troops are beginning to expire, just as the war on our part, in downright earnestness of purpose, is about to begin. A correspondent of the Mobile Register, from the rebel camp opposite Fort Pickens, writes that the time of the First Alabama regiment is from day to day expiring; that "great efforts have been made to induce the men to re-enlist," but that they were "poorly successful," except in the case of one company, which was "partially successful." We noticed lately the same difficulty in a Virginia brigade on the Potomac; and nothing at this time appears more seriously to puzzle the rebel government than these one year enlistments which are coming to an end.

Another defeat or two of the rebel armies, or another judgment or two of our forces in some stronghold along the Southern coast; will be very apt to settle this question of the re-enlistment of the rebel soldiers, in a general break up of every rebel camp and in a general collapse of this over-inflated rebellion, from Massachusetts to New Orleans. To this end we expect some decided manifestations in the South from the operations of the Burnside expedition. In a word, under the conservative war policy of President Lincoln, and under the skillful directions of Gen. McClellan, everything in the arrangements and forces of this campaign promises the suffocation of this rebellion before the merry month of May.

There is a terrible to do amongst the demimonde at the capital about Mrs. Lincoln's grand soiree this evening. *Les ennuis*, as Moliere calls the outsiders on such occasions, are savagely indignant, and protest against their exclusion as a violation of the constitution. The long-haired, white-coated, tobacco-chewing and expectorant abolitionist members of that interesting section of the community threaten an impeachment of the President. But what is to be done? Mrs. Lincoln is responsible to Congress for the Presidential apopnoes, and it is not safe to trust an ice cream thus manipulated in the itching fingers of these sweet smelling patriots. Of course the decent portion of Washington society is delighted. The members of the different legations intend to muster in full force upon the occasion, and are busily engaged brushing up their uniforms and decorations. All Washington, in short, is in a ferment, and what, between the pleasurable excitement of the fortunate recipients of invitations and the sourness and bitterness of those who have been omitted from the list, there will be no peace in the capital for some weeks to come. Talk of the social hostilities engendered by the war. They pale in violence before the asperities aroused by this important event.

The malcontents are not, however, confined to the capital. Self-conceit and vanity can be hurt at a longer distance than that. Mrs. Lincoln unhappily omitted from her invitations the "big and little villains" and their Fort Gansevoort associates of the Times. Hence the spasms apparent in the following:—

Poor old Bennett, cut off by the stern dictum of public opinion from openly plotting treason, is reduced to the condition of a "big and little villain" of the White House. It appears that Mrs. Lincoln, bored to death by the doleful chatter of army contractors and the like who come around her, has issued cards for *soirees* at the White House on Wednesday evening. Bennett yesterday pitched into the proposed party, and called it, among a string of other hard names, "a social blunder much to be regretted." Now, what a "social blunder." Why not a political "blunder," a diplomatic "blunder," or any other "blunder." The fact is, Bennett speaks by the card, or rather by the want of card; for did he not send out to the capital that illustrious plenipotentiary of the House of Representatives, the Chevalier Wilkoff, expressly to see if he could not get an invitation to the *soiree*? But Wilkoff returned ticketless. *Finis ille lacrimis.* That is the whole secret of his "heartburnings," "sore disappointments and chagrin," and perfectly accounts for his yesterday's tirade about the "social blunder much to be regretted."

There is a question here, not of one, but two blunders. One is that of our correspondent, who flippantly applied a criticism, borrowed from some Mrs. Malaprop of his acquaintance, to Mrs. Lincoln's manner of selecting her guests. For stupidity and presumption such as this we have a remedy, and know how to apply it. The second blunder is that which assumes that we are among the unfortunates that were left out in the cold by the President's lady on this occasion. To relieve the anxiety which we know is devouring our Fort Gansevoort contemporary on this point, we see no harm in stating that we are indebted to Mrs. Lincoln's amiability for an invitation for ourselves and family to the soiree in question, and only regret that the pressure of our business occupations prevents our accepting it.

We see that some others of the disappointed are commenting through the press on the impropriety of social festivities being held just now at the White House. If ever there was a time when they are politic and advisable it is at present. The writers who make such silly remarks must be ignorant of the social war that is being carried on in Washington against the White House and its occupants. The secessionist families, who constitute the greater portion of what is called the *dile* of society there, are doing their best, by closing their houses and refusing to go out, to render the capital gloomy and dismal, so that it may contrast unfavorably with the brilliant society and gaiety of Richmond. Mrs. Lincoln is a woman of spirit and is not to be put down in this way. She argues, and argues justly, that it is her duty to show these haughty secessionist dames that there is sufficient of fashion and respectability among the ladies of loyal families in and about Washington to constitute a court that will easily cast into the shade that of their bogus President.

Apologies of courts and court dames, we see that, in connection with this affair, the Times has got hold of that mysterious but omnipresent being the Chevalier Wilkoff, useful alike as a political go-between or as the bearer of bouquets and perfumed billets. We would advise our Fort Gansevoort contemporary to steer clear of the Chevalier. He has a singular facility of thrusting his diplomatic fingers into other people's pies. We understand that he has been prying about a good deal among the contractors and political jobbers who have infested Washington for the last six months, and can tell a thing or two if he chooses. *Gare au Chevalier, Messieurs.* His squibs and crackers are not all as harmless as you suppose.

MANNING OUR SEACOAST FORTIFICATIONS.—The Old City Guard of New York, formerly commanded by the rebel Major General Mansfield Lovell, has taken the initiative as a volunteer battalion of seacoast artillerymen. The Old Guard is now under the command of Capt. E. L. Stone, numbers about two hundred and fifty rank and file, and has a recruiting office and drill room at No. 654 Broadway. The members are drilled every evening in the management of a large thirty-two pounder, and are occasionally permitted by the government to practise in our harbor forts. Our city militiamen could not do better than to join this guard, or organize similar battalions.

Indeed, we hope to see the Old Guard's example generally imitated throughout the country. Not only our large cities, but almost our ties in the event of a foreign war, and while we entire coast, will be the points of decisive battle batteries and erect forts here and there to protect the coasts, we should be equally upon the alert to provide men to man and defend the fortifications. Such cities as New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Portland ought to be able to protect themselves against any naval attack without calling for a single soldier from the regular army; and if the present splendid opportunities for practice and experience are rightly improved, we shall have such corps of trained